

Remarks and Arguments

Applicant has canceled independent claim 32. The pending claims are 26-31.

Claims 26-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fujii JP 08-288069 A. This was a new ground of rejection.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the Fujii reference does not constitute prior art because of Applicant's earlier priority date for the claimed subject matter. The Fujii reference was not published until November 1996, which is after the filing dates of Applicant's following two priority applications (copies enclosed):

- United Kingdom GB9615883.7 filed July 29, 1996
- United Kingdom GB9619382.6 filed September 17, 1996

Thus, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the patentability rejection based on the Fujii reference because it fails to constitute prior art.

Request to Make Arai U.S. Patent 5, 981,092 of Record

Applicant further requests that Arai U.S. Patent 5,981,092, previously relied upon by the Examiner, but not listed on the Examiner's Search Report (PTO 892), be added to a PTO 892 form so that the reference is officially included in the prior art of record noted on the front of any patent which issues from this application.

Reconsideration

It is believed that all claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance.

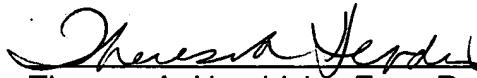
Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that a teleconference would expedite prosecution of the present application the Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Any amendments or cancellation or submissions with respect to the claims herein is made without prejudice and is not an admission that said canceled or amended or otherwise affected subject matter is not patentable. Applicant reserves the right to pursue canceled or amended subject matter in one or more continuation, divisional or continuation-in-part applications.

To the extent that Applicant has not addressed one or more assertions of the Examiner because the foregoing response is sufficient, this is not an admission by Applicant as to the accuracy of such assertions.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any fees in addition to fees submitted herewith that may be required to enter/allow this response and any accompanying papers to our deposit account 02-3038 and credit any overpayments thereto.

Respectfully submitted



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